1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

reeds. The village paths, or streets, are thus lined on both sides with high fences pierced at intervals by entrances left solid at the bottom, both to keep out stray pigs and to keep in those belonging to the owner of the enclosure. The upper part of each entrance is usually open when the owner is at home, but can be blocked, when he so wishes, by a movable reed panel. No man ever enters the enclosure of another without invitation. Indeed, the general communism and publicity of life is counterbalanced by a very great sense of possessiveness about a man's actual home. There are, it is true, certain occasions when even this private spot may be rudely violated, but these are ritual occasions which in a description of everyday life may be left out of account. Within the enclosure are two courts. Firstly an outer court, containing the wife's house,[1] or, if there is more than one wife, a house for each. Here also live, in the same house with their mother, unmarried daughters as well as sons till these are able to dispense with her help. It is into this court that the entrance from the village street gives access. Behind this, partly separated from it except in the case of the very newly wed by another reed screen, is the inner court where is the husband's own house. With him live sometimes a young son or two, but these are usually provided for by the erection of a communal bachelors' house shared by closely related boys and unmarried youths, who may also have friends from other less closely related families to live with them. Both outer and inner court also contain storehouses for yams and yet other houses for the pigs, but valuable tuskers are always kept by the husband in the inner court. Cohabitation occurs only in the wife's house, never in the man's, for fear of pollution by menstrual blood, and never during the woman's menstrual period. There is a tendency, though it is by no means a set rule, for a rich man to gather his married sons around him in a larger compound composed of a number of enclosures with inner and outer court such as have just been described, and it is in these compounds that the bachelors' houses are built.

Lodges.

Besides dwelling-houses, each Vao village possesses a number of lodges,[2] or what in current anthropological literature are called club-houses, which in Vao are called *na-tamp*, in which the males of certain sections of the clan congregate and sometimes sleep. These are quite different from the *ghamal*, which belongs to the whole village, and are from one point of view the mortuary chapels of the family or group of families to which they belong. Each lodge is surrounded by a stone wall

[1] Houses are so constructed that the thatched roof reaches the ground on either side. For details of construction see construction of *ghamal*, p. 440. Ordinary dwelling-houses are similarly constructed but on a smaller scale.

[2] See p. 63.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

843 very long one many times round her belly, at the same time singing the appropriate songs. The object of this is to prevent the child from being born too soon (*e wor malat*) or else born dead or sickly.[1]

Wife's People Invade Husband's House

843 574 Godefroy gives a graphic description of the power exercised over the prospective father by his wife's people during her first pregnancy: [2]

"During the period preceding the birth of her first child, the wife's parents pay frequent visits to their daughter, bringing her provisions and tasty titbits of all kinds. Out of respect for them, the husband leaves the house. For, on the preceding evening, his wife will have warned him: 'My mother and her people are arriving to-morrow.' This means that her mother, her father, her brother, in fact her mother's whole household, is going to arrive the next day on a formal visit. The husband orders his day accordingly; he does not take part in the general exodus to the gardens on the mainland with all the rest, but stays on the shore repairing his canoe or cutting a new paddle—there are always small jobs of this kind with which he can occupy his time.

"At about ten o'clock in the morning a child will be sent to tell him that his wife's people have taken possession of his house. He stays where he is. As soon as they are installed, the wife's mother and her daughters set about preparing the yam pudding which, well cooked and fragrant with aromatic herbs, will that evening rejoice the whole company, including the husband. During this time, the wife's father and his son inspect the premises, and test the construction of the house. . . . They continue their examination of all they can see, waiting for the moment when the husband will make his appearance along some neighbouring path. At last the husband comes, feigning indifference and conveying for all the world the impression that he knows nothing at all of what is going on.

"Husband and wife's brother now dispose themselves for their meeting, the wife's brother holding his head high, feeling himself really at home, the husband with eyes cast down, as if he were a stranger with no right to be there. They exchange a few words, and make formal conversation for the sake of attracting the attention of the wife's father, who then comes up and adds a word or two to the conversation.[3] That is all. The

[1] The importance of the physiological events occurring in the seventh month are marked in Lambumbu and Lagalag by prayers offered to the ancestors in order that they shall watch over and take care of the pregnant woman two months before the birth (see footnote on p. 177).

[2] The quotation following is from Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 109-10, substituting kinship terms for the names of the missionised natives concerned.

[3] The attitude of respect to the wife's father decrees that a man may not mention his name or go behind his back. There is also considerable hesitation about speaking to him, and this is done as a rule only in reply to a question addressed by the father-in-law (see p. 135).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

presentation has been made.[1] The husband now enters the house on the pretext of fetching some tool or anything that will serve as an excuse to go in. In the presence of the women who are kneading and scraping the yams, he adopts an attitude of pleasure and utters joyful exclamations, but he does not speak a word.[2] This constitutes his presentation to the women. There is nothing left for the husband to do but to disappear, and to return to his work on the beach. His wife's brother goes with him. As for the wife's father, he seeks out, among the neighbouring huts, some man of his own age, and the rest of his day will be taken up with gossip and the lighting of interminable pipes.[3]

"Towards dark, the whole company, including the husband, prepares to take the evening meal. As during the morning, the husband occupies the position of guest. He takes part in the meal, but eats only a little.[4] As for the wife's family, they behave precisely as if they were at home, though in their son-in-law's house. When the meal is finished, they gather what is left over, to serve for their own breakfast the next morning. The husband adds produce from his own garden; at his own expense he fills his father-in-law's pipe. The food is then done up in parcels, the mother-in-law and her daughters load the parcels on their backs, and the visitors depart. The husband accompanies them a short distance, and the visit is over.

"This initial visit means that the members of the wife's family intend to take responsibility for all the care of which the young wife will shortly be in need before, during and after her confinement. This care is extended towards the child, even when it has grown to youthful manhood. The services, however, are not extended free. At the birth of a first child, the husband is obliged to present his wife's parents with a large tusked pig, worth £6.[5] Subsequent births are less heavily taxed. . . ."

Birth

In contrast to the practice on the mainland of Malekula and in the remaining Small Islands, where women give birth in their own dwelling-houses, in Vao, according to Godefroy, this takes place in one of the special women's Lodges already mentioned.[6]

[1] I.e. the husband is presented, in his own house, to his father-in-law, whom of course he has known all his life.

[2] A man may not speak to his wife's mother (see p. 135).

[3] A European innovation. There was no smoking before the advent of the white man.

[4] This also forms part of the attitude of respect incumbent on a man towards his wife's parents.

[5] The chief payment is actually made to her brother (see p. 178).

[6] See p. 73.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

"Right of inspection" exercised by the child's maternal kin. Father and mother's brother pray for the well-being of the child.

According to Godefroy, immediately after the birth the husband's house is invaded by his wife's family, consisting of the child's mother's brother and her parents, to exercise the "right of inspection" over both mother and child in accordance with the rules of the matrilineal system. The father's brothers and their sons are not entirely excluded, since they too share the "right of inspection," though in a lesser degree and must exercise it with discretion.

If the child is a boy, and only then, a special rite occurs on the day after birth, in which the mother's brother takes a leading part. The father presents a fowl to the mother's brother, who takes it to his own Lodge, where it is cooked in a pudding. Then all the members of his Lodge together hold a feast of communion (*ghete-ghati*) with the ancestors, during which they recite a prayer. This prayer begins with the phrase "*Tamat wurogh*," which is the customary opening on all similar occasions. The word *tamat* means both "ghost" and "peace," and *wurogh* "to be quiet." The invocation may therefore be translated "Ancestors, peace, be quiet," meaning "Do not molest us, but listen to our prayer." This is then followed by a specific petition, which on this occasion begins "Here is a new child born to us," and goes on to ask the ancestors to look after it and let it grow up to be "first a youth (*malakel*) and in due time an honoured old man (*na-humbe*)." [1]

On the same or the next day, the mother's brother in return takes a fowl to the child's father, who cooks it in his Lodge, and in a similar manner, with the members of his Lodge, makes communion with his ancestors, begging them to let the boy grow up and become a *malakel* and then a *na-humbe*.

Fifth Day

(*a*) *Naming the child.*

The Fifth Day (*bong e-lim*) after birth is an important one, for on this day the child, whether boy or girl, receives its name, and the mother's brother his tribute of pigs. On the morning of this day the child is laid

[1] This is the set formula. The ancestors are never asked to make the child into a *mer-sean* (see p. 529), the oldest age-grade of all, since this term is a purely descriptive one and does not carry the religious connotation connected with *na-humbe* (see also p. 529).

For other instance of the use of the invocation *tamat wurogh* see p. 557. The phrase is used throughout the Small Islands.

Instances of similar prayers offered by the wife's brother to her deceased father (or father's father) in Lagalag and to her deceased mother or father's mother in Lambumbu are given by Deacon (4, pp. 237-8), though in this case they are offered during the seventh and eighth months of pregnancy and the object of the prayer is the safety not of the as yet unborn child but of the mother. The brother so praying is rewarded for his good offices by payment of a pig. The communion rite includes the cooking of a fowl and exchange visits between the wife's brother and the father as on Vao.

1;Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

Authority of the Mother's People

854 574 According to Godefroy, during the whole of this period and during the next few months the mother's people continue at frequent intervals to invade the father's house, whence they visit the women's lodge in the exercise of their "right of inspection" over the mother and child. In the special case cited by him, when the child, in this case a girl, was about three or four months old the mother took it for a short stay in her parents' village, returning with presents of food.[1]

593 604 Henceforth "it is the mother's side of the family that exercises all authority over the children. The mother's eldest brother is in fact the legal 'father,'[2] and it is him that the children call *tete*, the word used elsewhere for 'father.'[3] The lack of social respect paid to the real father is shown by the fact that he is actually called by his own children by his personal name, not only in address, but even when his children are speaking of him to others."[4] Thus also "until he is married, a boy regards the family of the mother as his own true family. . . . When the child finds the parental scoldings irksome, he takes refuge with his mother's brother, and may even stay with him several months until his anger cools."[5] The rôle of the mother's brother in this respect is described as one of "guardianship and moderation."[6]

Special Rites with Regard to the Eldest Son

852 In addition to the rites described above there are two special rites connected with the birth and dedication of an eldest son. As in the more aristocratic sections of our own society in which primogeniture is a recognised institution, so also in Vao considerable emphasis is laid on the position of the eldest son. Thus, in the tale dealing with the foundation of the Vao Maki, To-wewe, the founder, was one of ten brothers, of whom he himself was the eldest.[7] The pattern of ten brothers is a common one throughout Malekula, closely associated with the decimal arrangement of upright stones on the Upper Side of the dancing-ground during High Maki and of the corresponding sacrificial stakes during Low Maki. It will be seen later how during High Maki each tenth stone may be furnished with a shrine.[8] In Atchin such an arrangement has been stabilised to the extent that the division of each village into Quarters has disappeared and has been replaced by a division into ten families, each

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 111-12.
[2] This of course only means that he exercises certain rights elsewhere exercised by the father.
[3] But see p. 127. The term of reference for the mother's brother in *soguk*.
[4] Godefroy, ibid. p. 109.
[5] Ibid. p. 111. [6] Ibid. p. 114. [7] See p. 284. [8] See p. 425.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

followed then by

Togh-vanu (on whose land they live)
Pete-hul
Peter-ihi
Venu
Norohure
Singon.

On occasions of great importance, such as that of the culminating Maki rite, parties will also come from other islands such as Atchin, Wala and even Rano, and from certain villages on the Malekulan mainland, and these will dance last of all.

On every occasion, while the guests dance in one body, the Maki-men act as hosts, in a manner that will be described when we come to give an account of the dances themselves.[1]

The same order is observed when the men of other villages come to help in work requiring a communal effort, such as the transporting of tree trunks for canoe-building or gong-making, in which case the Maki-men, besides providing food for feasting, encourage them and express their own joy by singing songs belonging to the relevant song-and-dance cycles.

Ceremonial Presentation of Yams

Closely connected with these visits is the ceremonial presentation to the guests of yams and other food-stuffs. These include live and dead pigs, coconuts of all kinds, bread-fruit and other delicacies, but the chief and most important standard items are yams, which, for this purpose, are arranged and presented in three different ways, each with its own distinctive functional name.[2] These are:

(*a*) *Na-mbüt.* This is a single yam chosen for the smoothness of its skin, to the "head" of which is tied a bunch of croton leaves (*ro sas*). Whenever any announcement is made concerning the date of a forthcoming rite in which members of other villages may in any way be concerned, a message is sent, to be delivered in the dancing-ground of each village on the island, and the messenger at the same time takes with him, and deposits as a compliment to the village in question, one of these decorated yams. Similar yams are also presented to those who attend the rite, not as individuals but as representatives of their respective villages, one only being given to each village, or as the natives put it, "one to each dancing-ground." Information regarding the performance of lesser rites not needing the active co-operation of other villages is similarly

[1] See p. 325 and elsewhere in Chapter XI.

[2] These functional names are quite distinct from the names given to the different varieties of yam, of which there are at least sixty.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

X796
431
574

conveyed after they have been performed, and each village or island is thus continually kept informed of the progress of all public rites such as the Maki, Initiation, the erection of a new *ghamal*, and so on, in every other village. On account of their ambassadorial function I will therefore refer to these decorated yams as "Message-yams."

(*b*) *Rom betige*. *Rom* is the ordinary word for "yam," and *betige* means "single" or "alone." This is a single plain yam of any variety, and will be referred to, using a literal translation of the native term, as a "Lone-yam." Such lone-yams form part of the gift of food made to those who attend or assist in any rite.

(*c*) *Ghoal*. This consists of a single large yam or a bunch of yams attached to the end of a pole for carrying, and will therefore be referred to as an "Attached-yam." Such yams are placed in a line on the ground on the occasion of every major rite, one for each village represented among the guests. The number of yams on each pole will be in accordance with the importance of the rite and with the numerical strength of the visiting village.

Gifts never received direct.

X796
431
576

It is important to note, with regard to the presentation of yams, coconuts, dead pigs and all other food-stuffs, and even such personal gifts as mats, that no gift ever passes direct from hand to hand. There is an unwritten law that, though all gifts are minutely recorded in the natives' minds, and though full return gifts must always sooner or later be made, with the exception of certain ritual presentations no gift may be directly made, or even so much as openly acknowledged at the time by the recipient, at least if such gift is made in public. A stranger not aware of this convention who presumes to offer such a gift into a native's hand in public will throw him into the utmost confusion. Nothing will persuade him to touch it, and he will leave it lying on the ground rather than acknowledge its existence. Later, he will, of course, return and pick it up with the knowledge that everyone knows it is his. But the stranger will have been guilty of a gross breach of etiquette. One of my own first experiences in this respect was when, during a lull in some rite, a young man of my acquaintance passed by me with an air of complete absorption in something else, and, without so much as looking at me, absent-mindedly let fall a money-mat at my feet. I thought he had dropped it by mistake, but it turned out to be a gift, and my own return gift was made subsequently in similar fashion.[1]

[1] Compare Bohun Lynch, p. 226: "Gifts should be presented in the most utterly careless manner and received with the most stately indifference. . . . The inner meaning of the manner is that friendship ought to be quite independent of gifts. And gifts must be returned strictly *ad valorem*."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

YAMS LAID OUT IN HEAPS FOR EACH VISITING VILLAGE

Names of the villages are called out in reverse order to that in which they come to dance or work.

In the same way yams, which are the staple food and form the basis of all feasts, are never given direct, but on all ordinary ritual occasions are placed on the dancing-ground in heaps, usually in a straight line, and then not for individuals, but for groups of individuals as represented by the villages to which they belong. This arrangement is called *ra re ghini vanu*, "We set them out for (each) place." When the rite is restricted to members of the home-village, the yams are placed in four heaps, one for each Quarter-Lodge, each heap being yet further divided into two for the two "Sides of the Lodge." On special occasions they may be arranged in more spectacular fashion, with the poles of the attached-yams leant up against trees or specially constructed frames, or even planted upright in the ground. In all cases, when the rite is over, the names of the villages to which each heap belongs are announced in set formula by the leading man of the home-village. They will, however, not be touched till the last moment, when the recipients will gather them up and take them home.

The names of the visiting villages are called out in the reverse order to that in which they arrive either to dance or work, namely the furthest off first, and the nearest last, so that those living furthest away shall have more time in which to get home. The set form of words with which they are distributed is given on p. 371.

PRESENTATION OF TUSKED BOARS TO WIFE'S FATHER: "CIRCLING FOR PIGS"

The presentation of yams and other food-stuffs which I have just described is in the main collective, being directed towards groups of individuals according to the villages to which they belong. On a very different footing from this is the presentation of tusked boars by a man to his wife's father or brother already referred to on page 296. This presentation takes place not only in connexion with the Maki, but also on all major occasions involving the public sacrifice of high-grade tuskers. In theory it forms part of an exchange of gifts, since the wife's father also makes a counter-presentation to his son-in-law. In practice, however, as every young married man will bitterly explain, it is one of the chief mechanisms by which the wife's parents bleed their daughter's husband of his wealth.

The transaction is a complicated one, but the act of presentation is in the highest degree spectacular and is charged with an emotion yielding

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

In the evening puddings with fowls cooked in them are divided in the dancing-ground between the four Quarters of the village, and a feast is held.

After this important day there is an interval while the remaining parts of the canoe are being manufactured. These are then assembled on two separate days, the work being done by men of the home-village only, without further ceremony or special feasts.

14. Those parts assembled on the first of these two days are the thwarts (*gheatat*), the upper wash-strakes (*romb-romb*) and the outrigger-platforms (*hal avol*).

15. Those assembled on the second day are the main figure-heads (*na-ho*) and the subsidiary figure-heads (*mbambar*).[1]

16. The canoe is lifted from the trench in which it had been sunk and now receives a final trimming, all remaining splinters being removed.

17. *Ra wohoi mete-mbò.* Plugging the holes (*mete-mbò*) with coconut sheathing.

Save for the sail, the canoe is now complete. Since trade in pigs is the chief object of these craft, the expert (*mara kur*) is once more summoned to ensure success. This time his function is performed in public, though doubtless there will be some secret song and prayer. In full view of all he brings a sow and places it inside the forward end of the canoe, then throws at it a small young coconut (*veragat*), so that the frightened animal runs aft. A second coconut is thrown, so that the sow again runs forward through the length of the canoe. This symbolises fertility in pigs and is an augury for success in trading.

18. *Ra hele ghamban nen.* Sewing up the strips of sail. Throughout the period of manufacture, the women have been busy in their houses plaiting the strips from which the sail is made. These strips are now sewn together by the men, adorned with love-herbs (*masing*) and their various insignia. When the work is finished, puddings (*na-longk*) are divided among the four Quarters of the village, and the men then hold a feast.

INAUGURATION DANCE

On the night following the assembly of the sail, parties from all the villages of Vao, as well as guests from Atchin and other islands and the mainland, assemble in the dancing-ground for an all-night dance (*veluan na ghamban*, "dance of the sail").[2]

[1] No mention is made here of fore and after platforms, though these exist.

[2] I have no record of the previous dancing of Vao villages in rotation, such as occurs on Atchin. This does not mean that this does not take place.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

Proceedings begin with the dance called *Le-tean*, and when this is over, payment of pigs is made to all those living who have previously made the sail of a sea-going canoe.[1] These pigs are presented by the chief owner placing them one by one upon his shoulder and calling on the receiver to come and take it. *Tunen* is then danced till dawn, when pigs are killed and placed on heaps of yams for each village represented. There is no *na-leng*.

The sail is then taken to the beach and placed on the canoe. This is then launched and the sail hoisted, and as they sail away the crew stand on the outrigger-platforms dancing and singing songs of the *Tunen* song-and-dance cycle.

CONSECRATION RITE (GODEFROY'S ACCOUNT)

The Inauguration dance, of which the above is a brief and incomplete account, is probably connected with the Consecration rite which Godefroy records:

"This rite has for its object the putting of a taboo on the canoe or whaler, that is to say, making them taboo to women. Once such a vessel is consecrated, no woman may touch it, far less embark on it. . . .

"In 1926, the four smaller clans of Vao—always associated together against the two larger—combined to buy a whaler 30 feet long; it cost them £200. As they received delivery of it about New Year's Day, they called it 'New-year,' which they pronounce *niouyet*.[2] For three months it lay at anchor off the beach belonging to Norohure, save for a few short journeys to the neighbouring islets and to the Canal du Segond.

"On account of the ravages of the sea-worms which live in those warm waters and bore through the keels of wooden boats, they hastened to construct a shelter for their beautiful whaler. They immediately made this shelter taboo, by sacrificing a pig in the dancing-ground. This shelter is one of the four existing on the shores of the island; I say 'exist,' for in fact there was only one left standing at the time the shelter in question was erected, the others had fallen in and rotted where they were, but the natives referred to them as if they still existed, on account of the sacrifices that had been made for them.

"As for the whaler, she received a grand consecration, similar to that of one of the great chiefs.[3] In her honour were sacrificed a dozen great tusked boars and a hundred cocks and hens, and two tons of yams were offered and placed, all decorated, on the great *kal-kal*.[4] . . . Then the natives danced all night till dawn, as is done in the great [Maki] rites.

[1] I.e. when the canoe is made and owned by the active "line" of Maki-men, to the members of the introducing "line."

[2] A typical example of French transliteration. The *t* is of course silent.

[3] The word "chief" is used throughout this account to mean "man of high Maki rank."

[4] Yam-table.